

TWO GODS GO COURTING

(Ebisu Bishamon)

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Ebisu (Shite)

Wealthy Man (Ado)

Bishamon (Koado)

WEALTHY MAN: I am a man of great good fortune. I have only one beautiful daughter. I have made a pledge to both the God Bishamon at Kurama and the God Ebisu at Nishinomiya that I will give her hand in marriage to anyone at all who is well-born, noble, and wealthy, and I received a divine revelation from the both that I am to put up a notice board to that effect. I must put up my notice board quickly. (He puts up his notice board on the upstage right pillar and crosses upstage left and sits on the floor.)

BISHAMON: (He enters carrying a lance over his right shoulder. Singing.)

To begin with, know that

I am the one known as

God Bishamon of Mount Kurama.

(Speaking.) Not far away from this place lives a man of great good fortune who has only one beautiful daughter. He made a pledge to me that he will give her hand in marriage to anyone at all who is well-born, noble, and wealthy, and I gave him a divine revelation that he should put up a notice board to that effect. Since there is absolutely no one who is as well-born, noble, and wealthy as myself, I intend to visit this man and become his son-in-law. (He begins his journey.) Truly, a father-in-law is a happy man. If I become this man's son-in-

law, I intend to help him maintain his great good fortune, and to gain ever increasing prosperity and glory. Well, here I am already. First I will announce myself. Hello in there. Is anybody home?

WEALTHY MAN: Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

BISHAMON: I am one who has come from the Kurama neighborhood, with the desire to become your son-in-law.

WEALTHY MAN: As you say you come from the Kurama neighborhood, could it be that you are the God Tamon?

BISHAMON: In fact, that is indeed who I am.

WEALTHY MAN: Well, I must say, I am most honored that you have come all this way to visit me. First, I humbly beseech you to come into my house. (**BISHAMON** enters the house and sits on a stool.)

EBISU: (He enters carrying a fishing pole over his right shoulder and a huge sea bream under his left arm. Singing.)

To begin with, know that

I am the one known as

God Bishamon of Mount Kurama.

(Speaking.) Not far away from this place lives a man of great good fortune who has only one beautiful daughter. He made a pledge to me that he will give her hand in marriage to anyone at all who is well-born, noble, and wealthy, and I gave him a divine revelation that he should put up a notice board to that effect. Since there is absolutely no one who is as well-born, noble, and wealthy as myself, I intend to visit this man and become his son-in-law. (He begins his journey.) Truly, a father-in-law is a happy man. If I become this man's son-in-law, there is no doubt that not only he himself but everyone in the surrounding area all the way to the next village will become increasingly wealthy. Well, here I am already. And here is his notice board. Well, I must say, it is covered with writing in very black ink. I

will take it down. (He does so.) First I will announce myself. Hello in there. Is anybody home?

WEALTHY MAN: Well, someone is at the door. Who is there?

BISHAMON: I am one who has come from the Nishinomiya neighborhood, with the desire to become your son-in-law.

WEALTHY MAN: As you say you come from the Nishinomiya neighborhood, could it be that you are the God Ebisu Saburo?

EBISU: How slow you are, how slow! It is I, Ebisu Saburo, who appears now before you.

WEALTHY MAN: I am most grateful that you have all the way here to appear before me. A short while ago, God Bishamon of Mount Kurama came desiring to become my son-in-law.

EBISU: What? You say Bisha is here? As he has attained Buddhahood, he should not come anywhere saying he has the desire to become anyone's son-in-law.

BISHAMON: Father-in-law, Father-in-law!

WEALTHY MAN: (Going to kneel in front of BISHAMON.) Yes.

BISHAMON: Who is it I hear nosing around at the door about becoming your son-in-law?

WEALTHY MAN: God Ebisu Saburo of Nishinomiya has arrived.

BISHAMON: What's that? You say Sabu of Nishinomiya is here?

WEALTHY MAN: And I have already shown him into this room.

BISHAMON: Hey, hey! Is the one who has come here really you, Sabu of Nishinomiya?

EBISU: And is the one who speaks thus you, Sabu of Mount Kurama?

BISHAMON: Father-in-law, Father-in-law! That Sabu must have come here guessing he would find me here.

WEALTHY MAN: How could he have guessed such a thing?

BISHAMON: I am certain that the news of me becoming your son-in-

law has been heard all the way to the outskirts of Nishinomiya, and thinking that there would be a great demand for fresh fish in celebration, he must have come to do a little business for himself here.

EBISU: Father-in-law, Father-in-law! That Bisha must have come here guessing he would find me here.

WEALTHY MAN: How could he have guessed such a thing?

EBISU: I am certain that the news of me becoming your son-in-law has been heard all the way to the depths of Mount Kurama, and thinking that there would be a great supply of fresh fish provided for the celebration, he must have come thinking to help people avoid getting the stomachache by selling them some pepper.

WEALTHY MAN: You must desist from calling each other names, for, in any case, I wish to accept one who has great power and influence as my son-in-law.

BISHAMON: Father-in-law, Father-in-law! What you say is excellent. In that case, I will explain to you my illustrious background. (Speaking in an exaggerated declamatory style.) Now, the one known as God Tamon is the Lord of the Temple of the Four Kings. As such, I protect all living things on Mount Sumi, I bring good fortune to the poor, and all prosperity, all wealth, and all good fortune come from the protection of this same Tamon. Thus am I worshipped on the first Tiger Day of each New Year, when I demonstrate my great power. But now I will explain to you the background of that Sabu. Though he is called a god, he does not live in any forest or woods, but in the very midst of the city market where he is trod upon by all sorts of straw sandals and wooden clogs. Upon occasion he remembers to board a small boat and sail out into the offing where he perches himself on the end of a rice stalk straw and drinks sacred wine while wearing

scraps of silk and other fine cloth. There is no way he can save the world with nothing more than this.

EBISU: All those things I do are indeed for bringing salvation to the world. Now I will explain to you my illustrious background. When the great gods Izanagi and Izanami became husband and wife on a bed of moss in the sacred cave of heaven., they gave birth to the deities of the sun and of the moon, and to celestial princes Hiruko and Susano-o. The one called Hiruko was myself, and since I am the third child and younger brother to the Great Sun Goddess Amaterasu, the people of the world came to pay homage to me at Nishinomiya and they call me Ebisu Saburo. Thus it must be said that I am as well-born as anyone. But since that Bisha has become a Buddha, living in the very depths of Mount Kurama where no people abide, taking great care to avoid making any enemies, which is a most unnecessary precaution. On top of all this, that Bisha has a master.

BISHAMON: What do you mean saying I have a master?

EBISU: In your manifestation as Tamon, one of the four kings of heaven, the Great Buddha is your master, is he not?

BISHAMON: He is not my master!

EBISU: No, he is your master!

BISHAMON: (Thrusting his halberd toward EBISU.) I'll stab you!

EBISU: (Holding up his fishing pole.) I'll hook you!

WEALTHY MAN: (Singing.)

**No this you must never do,
just listen to me.**

**If you truly wish to become my son-in-law,
You must present to me some of your treasures.**

BISHAMON: (Singing.)

Here ye, here ye, I now present

Precious treasures to you.

(He dances to instrumental accompaniment. Then he continues dancing as he sings the following.)

Here ye, here ye, I now present

Precious treasures to you.

I conquer evil demons,

I drive away all disasters,

I present my halberd to my father-in-law.

(The WEALTHY MAN kneels before BISHAMON to receive the halberd.)

EBISU: (Singing.)

Nor will I do anything less than this rascal.

(He dances to instrumental accompaniment. Then he continues dancing as he sings the following.)

Nor will I do anything less than this rascal, for

I bring you good fortune in making and selling things,

And total happiness in everything you do.

And I present to you my fishing hook

Bearing the fish I caught on it.

To my father-in-law.

(The WEALTHY MAN kneels before EBISU to receive the pole, hook, and fish.)

BISHAMON: (Singing.)

Now as he continues to beg for it, I take

Off my helmet and give it

To my father-in-law too.

(The WEALTHY MAN kneels before BISHAMON to receive the helmet.)

EBISU: (Singing.)

My hat I take off and give

To my father-in-law too.

(The WEALTHY MAN kneels before EBISU to receive his hat.)

EBISU & BISHMON: (Singing and dancing.)

As we are both gods of happiness

Equal to each other,

As we are both gods of happiness

Equal to each other,

We now leave things as they are here,

As we go on our way.